IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 3, line 23 and ending on page 3, line 29 with the following amended paragraph.

Figure 1 is a block diagram of a system 10 in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention. System 10 includes a server sub-system 12, sometimes referred to herein as server 12, and a plurality of user devices 14, sometimes referred to herein as client sub-systems, connected to server 12. In one embodiment, devices 14 are computers including a web browser, and server 12 is accessible to devices 14 via a network such as an intranet or the Internet. In an alternative embodiment, devices 14 are servers for a network of customer devices.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 4, line 1 and ending on page 4, line 12 with the following amended paragraph.

Devices 14 are interconnected to the network, such as a local area network (LAN) or a wide area network (WAN), through many interfaces including dial-in-connections, cable modems and high-speed ISDN lines. Alternatively, devices 14 are any device capable of interconnecting to a network including a web-based phone or other web-based connectable equipment. Server 12 includes a database server 16 connected to a centralized ~~database 18~~database 20 containing information pertaining to various shipping carriers, flat rates, rates based on destination and various shipping alternatives and other related information. In one embodiment, centralized ~~database 18~~database 20 is stored on database server 16 and can be accessed by potential users at one of user devices 14 by logging onto server sub-system 12 through one of user devices 14. In an alternative embodiment centralized ~~database 18~~database 20 is stored remotely from server 12.

Please add the following new paragraph after the paragraph ending on page page 4, line 12 and before the paragraph beginning on page 4, line 13.

System 10 is protected from access by unauthorized individuals. Server 12 includes a receiving component that receives an inquiry from devices 14, a tracking component that tracks information on an on-going basis, a collection component that

collects information from users into centralized database 20, and an information fulfillment component that downloads accessed information after retrieving from centralized database 20 to a plurality of users in an order in which inquiries are received by the receiving component. Devices 14 include a sending component that sends an inquiry to server 12 so that server 12 can process and download requested information to devices 14. The sending component functions in response to a click of a mouse button or alternatively in response to a voice command.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 5, line 27 and ending on page 6, line 5 with the following amended paragraph.

Based on the initial requirements, server 12 compares 74 the received customer requirements to pre-stored information accessible by server 12. In one embodiment, the pre-stored information is stored in a database that resides on server 12. In an alternative embodiment, the pre-stored information is stored in a database remote from server 12. In yet another embodiment, all pre-stored logic tables and data structures are stored at various different servers and retrieved as necessary. Alternatively, pre-stored logic tables and data structures are downloaded dynamically from remote servers of different carriers, each of which are a type of identifier, as necessary. The pre-stored information includes information on various types of shipping carriers, their rates for specific destinations, delivery schedules, and other related information. Server 12 compares the user provided information to the pre-stored information to determine if any pre-stored information contained in the database satisfy the customer requirements submitted by the user.

Please add the following new paragraph after the paragraph ending on page 11, line 10 and the paragraph beginning on page 11, line 11.

In one embodiment, server 12 tracks information regarding a carrier on a real time basis and stores the information regarding the carrier in centralized database 20 on a real time basis. Server 12 provides information regarding a carrier to a user upon request on a real time basis.